

FORWARD

MAJOR INVESTMENT STUDY STATEMENT

The partnership of the City of Lincoln, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and the Lower Platte South Natural Resources District completed a Major Investment Study (MIS) report for Antelope Valley Improvements in December 1997. In Spring 1998, the results were adopted into the Lincoln-Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan, after Planning Commission and City Council public hearings. Additional studies led to several changes, also adopted into the plan. The preferred outcome is known as the Amended Draft Single Package.

Major Investment Studies (MISs) are called for in Section 450.318 of the joint Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)/Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Final Rule on Statewide and Metropolitan Planning. This requirement was triggered by Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) and Clean Air Act Amendments (CAAA) legislation.

An MIS is a comprehensive assessment of alternatives in a sub-area of a Metropolitan area where use of federal capital funds is contemplated. The MIS must conform to federal regulations and guidance. Key elements of an MIS are identified below.

- A proactive involvement program initiated early in the process.
- Consideration of a wide range of alternatives.
- Assessment of alternatives to the extent needed to answer community concerns and arrive at a defensible decision.
- Impact assessments including social, economic, environmental, safety, operational, land use, costs, financial and energy consumption.
- Effectiveness analysis in attaining local, state, or national purpose and need.
- As required by another executive order on environmental justice, an MIS must identify and address disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental impacts on low-income and minority populations.

Any resultant preferred alternative determined in the MIS must be placed in an area's transportation improvement program (TIP) to receive federal funds and the long-range plans and TIPs must be financially constrained according to ISTEA.

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT STATEMENT

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 42 USC 4321-4347, became effective January 1, 1970. The law requires that all federal agencies have prepared for every recommendation or report on proposals for legislation and other major federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human or natural environment, a detailed Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers are therefore required to have prepared an EIS on proposals that are to be funded under its authority if it is determined to be a major action significantly affecting the quality of the human or natural environment.

EISs are required for many federally supported projects as outlined in NEPA. The process of an EIS is carried out in two stages. Draft EISs are first written, forwarded for

review and comment to federal, state, and local agencies with jurisdiction by law or special expertise, and then made available to the public. This availability must occur at least 15 days before a public hearing, and no later than the time of the first public hearing notice or notice for opportunity for a hearing. Normally, 45 days plus mailing time will be allowed for comments to be made on the draft EIS unless Mr. Edward Kosola of the Federal Highway Administration grants a time extension. After this period has elapsed, preparation begins on the Final EIS.

Final EISs are prepared to reflect the distribution of the Draft by including the following:

- Basic content of the Draft Statement as amended due to the internal agency comments, editing, additional or modified alternatives being considered, and changes due to the time lag between the Draft and Final EIS.
- Summary of public hearing environmental comments.
- Summary of comments received on the Draft Statement.
- Evaluation and disposition of each substantive comment.

The final Environmental Impact Statement is submitted to the Federal Highway Administration for its approval and issuance of a Record of Decision (ROD) that states its findings and any requirements affecting project implementation.

Administrative action cannot take place sooner than 90 days after circulation of the Draft Statement to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) or 30 days after submittal of the Final Statement to the EPA.

Both the Draft and Final EIS are full disclosure documents, which provide a full description of the proposed project, the existing environment, and analysis of the anticipated beneficial or adverse environmental effects.

GENERAL REVIEWER INFORMATION

Major topics are divided into Chapters, each with a separate page-numbering sequence. Exhibits pertaining to each Chapter are located within each Chapter. Foldout maps showing the Amended Draft Single Package and the No-Action Alternative are provided at the front and back of the document respectively; readers may wish to leave these unfolded while reviewing the document.

Plans showing the Amended Draft Single Package studied in this DEIS and other information are located in Appendix I.

Dimensions, distances, volumes, etc. are shown in metric units, followed by English units (in parentheses). A list of abbreviations and acronyms is included in Appendix A.

Technical reports, which are identified in this EIS, are all incorporated by reference in this EIS. Appendix A provides a complete list of referenced reports. Copies of this EIS and the reports are available for public viewing during normal business hours at the City of Lincoln-Lancaster County Planning Department, Suite 213, 555 South 10th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska, 68508. Copies of the DEIS and Antelope Valley Study Team reports are also available for viewing at city libraries and available for purchase at Kinko's Copies, 1201 Q Street, Lincoln, Nebraska.